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28 May 1962

**SUBJECT:      Proposal to Meet the Adverse Effect of Weather on  
Priority Requirements in South China**

1.        The Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance has reviewed the current tense situation in Southeast Asia and concludes that in the light of the prevailing bad weather in the area (which is expected to continue at least through July) an expansion in the number of U-2 sorties is required. (A part of the required reconnaissance expansion involves North Vietnam and a separate recommendation has been forwarded on this area.) Coverage of the area of South China contiguous to North Vietnam and Laos is essential to evaluate the Southeast Asia situation. The single TACKLE mission approved for this area appears inadequate.

25X1A        2.        In South China we have achieved only limited photo coverage (Mission ☐) but it has revealed significant new information on military installations and capabilities. Other intelligence sources have been very inadequate on this type of information. Apart from the need for additional coverage in order to help gauge total Chinese Communist capabilities, coverage of known and suspect airfields, logistic and support facilities, transportation routes, and such key

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areas as Ping Hsiang to Liu-Chou and Lao Kay to Kun Ming is essential for a complete evaluation of the Southeast Asia situation. In the current situation in Laos, to which ChiCom elements could be introduced, specific information on the current status, nature, and characteristics of the ChiComs in South China is vitally required.

3. During the next two to three month period weather will severely limit the possibility of achieving satisfactory photographic coverage of a reasonable percentage of our highest priority objectives on a given mission. Accordingly, to obtain even a minimum coverage Operations will need considerable latitude in planning and executing missions. Permission to fly when only 25% of the area of target concern is forecast to be cloud-free is a partial answer. Authorization for additional missions will insure coverage of at least a portion of the highest priority objectives.

4. Recommendation: That approval be given for the conduct of U-2 reconnaissance over South China until most of the approved highest priority targets are covered, each mission to be scheduled if at least 25% of the area of target concern is forecast to be cloud free. Such a program might require on the order of 4-5 missions. In any event COMOR will provide a monthly evaluation of the results achieved and specify the remaining targets to be covered.

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